

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HD 1751
S532
C2

ECONOMIC RESEARCH
SERVICE REFERENCE
CENTER

JUL 25 1990

RECEIVED



Small-Scale Agriculture Today

Office for Small-Scale Agriculture

WINTER 1990

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Cooperative State Research Service • Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow

AT ISSUE...INFRASTRUCTURE

The management needs of small-scale agricultural enterprises are significant, perhaps greater than those of larger farms. Good management decisions are necessary for small-scale agriculture to succeed. Small-scale farms need support from all levels--national, regional, and local. The needs change constantly and new information must be made available.

Small-acreage enterprises are management-intensive. While the usual constraints of money and labor apply to small farms the same as they do to large enterprises, small farms face an additional problem: time management. Since 70 percent of all small farms are run as part-time operations efficient allocation of time becomes crucial.

A properly managed small-scale farm is comparable to a smooth running engine. A skilled person must properly adjust the fuel mixture, the timing, and the idle speed for smooth, efficient operation. To be successful, the small farm manager must tune up three aspects of the farm business--marketing, capital/finance, and appropriate technology. Managers of small-scale farms often experience great difficulty in properly managing these three problems to achieve a smooth running small-scale farm. They need information from all sources to help them manage their enterprises.

The economic impact of the small farm community reaches far beyond the value of food and fiber produced. By working on the land, consuming products and services, and working part-time on other jobs, small farm people keep rural America vital. Schools and churches stay open, stores continue to do business, farm implements are sold: the infrastructure of the country remains intact. (Howard "Bud" Kerr, an excerpt from the 1989 Yearbook of Agriculture)

SEND - Topics, technologies, and calendar of events (yours) to the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture (OSSA).
Dialcom-AGS3037 H. Kerr or Fax 202-475-3179.

Please Circulate

1989 YEARBOOK OF AGRICULTURE

"Farm Management: How to Achieve Your Farm Business Goals" is the title of the 1989 Yearbook of Agriculture released November 29, 1989, by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter said a yearbook focusing on farm management skills is long overdue.

"I've learned from personal experience as a farmer that seemingly small farm management steps can make a big difference in profits, and that's one of the reasons U.S. farming is so competitive internationally," Yeutter said. "This year's highly readable yearbook will help farmers improve their management skills and achieve greater success in today's tough business environment."

Each yearbook of agriculture is on a different theme. In this year's 336-page hardback, more than 80 authors from the farm community, academia, and government examine how farmers plan and manage their operations. The focus throughout the book is on individual farmers making decisions on the use of their resources--land, labor, capital, and managerial skills. Case studies reveal real farm managers solving real problems.

Each member of Congress has limited free copies of the yearbook for public distribution. Copies also are available for \$10.00 from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, DC 20402. In addition, the yearbook will be sold at government bookstores in many cities.

USDA has no copies for sale or distribution.

FOLLOW-UP ON METROPOLITAN AGRICULTURE

Last time "At Issue" talked about the importance of small farms in metropolitan areas and their flexibility and adaptation to market challenges and opportunities near urban centers. That information was drawn from "Metropolitan Growth and Agriculture: Farming in the City's Shadow," a new report from agricultural economists Ralph E. Heimlich and Douglas H. Brooks of USDA's Economic Research

Service. For more information on metropolitan agriculture, just dial ERS' toll free report line 1-800-999-6779 and ask for AER-619 (\$5.50 per copy) or write to ERS-NASS, P.O. Box 1608, Rockville, MD 20849-1608.

TOPICS AND TECHNOLOGY

FREE - A listing of 95 selected Cooperative Extension publications on alternative agriculture and small-scale farming for the Northwest (ID, OR, and WA). Contact: Don Harter, University of Idaho, 223 Morrill, Moscow, ID 83843; telephone 208-885-6834.

GREEN VS. WHITE - A little garden alchemy transforms green asparagus into tasty white spears that are scarce in this country, selling for as much as triple the price of the green asparagus. Contact: Donald J. Makus, USDA-ARS, South Central Family Farms Research, Booneville, AR 72929; telephone 501-675-3834.

TIP - Cherries need between 30 and 40 percent pollination for a decent crop. Thus, cherry orchards traditionally require several varieties to ensure pollination, which complicates pesticide application and harvesting.

Patents - Frozen concentrated milk, a cell-cultured version of a cancer drug, and yogurt-like pudding from nonfat dry milk are among 35 Agricultural Research Service inventions patented last year. Contact: Ann Whitehead, USDA-ARS, National Patent Program, Beltsville, MD 20705; telephone 301-344-2786.

TIP - Discarded yule trees placed in a farm pond or reservoir attract fish and improve angling. Important: Before such action is taken, some states require that permission be granted, i.e., the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Combating Grapevine Pests - Root borers kill grapevines and are the major insect pest of southeastern U.S. vineyards. Scientists are now developing pheromone-based lures for the borer's clearwing moth stage. Contact: J. Wendell Snow, USDA-ARS, Southeastern Fruit and Tree Nut Research, Byron, GA 31008; telephone 912-956-5656.

Specialty Potatoes - Yellow fleshed, blue skinned, and other potatoes have been grown on farms on a trial basis for three years. Information on market acceptance yields and nutritional values is available. Contact: Erik J. Sorensen, Washington State University Cooperative Extension, Franklin County Courthouse, Pasco, WA 99301; telephone 509-545-3511.

Understand Sprayers - For only \$3.25, "Pesticide Sprayers for Small Farms" (MD-317) is an invaluable tool to help small farmers make good decisions about pesticide application equipment. Contact: Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service (NRASE), Cooperative Extension, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Ithaca, NY 14852; telephone 607-255-7654.

Natural Insecticide - Like a bird house without a floor, a bat house attracts insect-eating bats. For basic house-building plans and answers to commonly asked questions contact: Peter T. Bromley, USDA-ES, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences, 150 Cheatam Hall, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0321; telephone 703-231-5087.

TIP - "Some cows bed down on shredded newspapers thanks to the drought-inspired brainstorm of two University of Missouri dairymen. The paper costs half as much as hay." (Wall Street Journal, September 28, 1989)

Tree Training - A new reusable clip for training trees is available. Developed and tested in Canada the reusable, lightweight clip is placed on only the branch or lateral branch that needs to be trimmed. Contact: M.T.W. Enterprises, Inc., P.O. Box 1027, Station A, Kelowna, B.C. Canada V.Y7P7; telephone 604-764-7274.

Home Crafts - The Crafts Network Guild is an organization and newsletter published six times a year and is especially directed to people making crafts out of their homes. Contact: Judy Sims, Judy's Idea, P.O. Box 42, Chattanooga, OK 73528; telephone 405-875-2742.

Marketing Homework - Make sure your efforts are targeted and cost-effective. For \$5.75 you can get a copy of "Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises." Order direct from NRES, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

Christmas Tree Standards - The USDA has revised the U.S. standards for Christmas tree grades, effective October 30, 1989. Copies of the revisions are available. Contact: Paul Manol, USDA-AMS, Fresh Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, Room 2056-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, DC 20090-6456; telephone 202-447-2185.

Tropical Plants - "About 25 percent of the prescription drugs used in the USA contain ingredients originally found in tropical plants. Among the diseases and conditions treated: childhood leukemia, malaria, cancer, heart ailments, hypertension, arthritis. Others may remain undiscovered: fewer than 1 percent of the tropical species have been thoroughly examined." (USA Today, October 4, 1989)

TIP - Always disconnect the ground terminal first when removing battery cables to prevent sparks if a wrench touches nearby metal.

Storing Dry Seeds - Put the equivalent of a one-inch layer of desiccant in the bottom of a gallon jar, then cram the jar full of seed packets and secure the top. If you're using zip-lock bags, a teaspoon of desiccant in the bag should keep the contents dry for months. Contact: Bruce Bugbee, Plant Soil and Biometeorology Department, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-4820; telephone 801-750-2765.

Herbs and Good Taste - A very special collection of recipes is given in Herbs 88 Chef Festival. The book costs \$11.50 and includes postage and handling. Contact: IHGMA, P.O. Box 281, Silver Spring, PA 17575; telephone 717-285-4252.

Specialty Equipment - Particularly suited to the small farm herb farmer; sources, ideas, and needs. For \$1.00 you get a list of growers on the current membership list and can share ideas. Contact: Tip Davis, Hawaiian Herb and Spice, P.O. Box 332, Volcano, HI 96785; telephone 800-437-2744.

Repel Deer - Leave the wrapper on perfumed small bars of soap that are used in hotels. Drill a hole in the soap bar and attach or hook with cooper electric wire to young fruit trees at browsing height.

Muscadine Grapes - New ways to plant, prune, fertilize, irrigate, and mulch muscadine grape vineyards are resulting from experiments underway in Mississippi. Contact: James M. Spiers, USDA-ARS, Small Fruits Research, U.S. Small Fruits Research Station, Poplarville, MS 39470; telephone 601-795-8751.

Disposal - The report bulletin "A Household Hazardous Waste Wheel" is available outlining disposal procedures for more than 30 common products. Costs \$2.00, check payable to One Million Marylanders. Contact: Barbara Knisely, Office of the Governor, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401; telephone 301-974-5300.

TIP - Always a problem with popcorn; unpopped kernels generally are too moist or too dry. Large kernels at the butt of an ear of corn have the highest moisture content; small kernels near the tip have the lowest. Kernels of a uniform size maximize the popping process.

Braccica Crops - "Extending the Grazing Season with Forage Braccica Crops" is a 15-minute video showing the effects of planting date and cultivar on the yield of turnip and kale in mid-November. Costs \$30.00, check payable to Pennsylvania State University. Contact: Melanie Macknair, Room 119 Agricultural Administrative Building, University Park, PA 16802; telephone 814-865-6309.

Sludge as Fertilizer - Utilizing sludge can provide a natural way to fertilize crops and add organic matter to the soil. Contact: Art Peterson, 354 Soils, Department of Soil Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI 53706; telephone 608-262-2631.

Educational Resources - "Selected Educational Resources" lists hundreds of Extension publications from all 50 states, which may be useful to small farmers. Contact: Dwayne L. Ingram, Department of Horticulture, University of Florida, 2523 Fifield Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611; telephone 904-392-7942.

Wisconsin Bulletin - The 174-page technical bulletin "Nutrient and Pesticide Best Management Practices for

Wisconsin Farmers" costs \$1.50. The focus is on the best use of fertilizers and pesticides which will help prevent surface and ground water pollution while aiding farm profitability. Contact: Scott Sturgule, Ag Resource Management Division, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, 801 West Badger Road, Madison, WI 53708; telephone 608-266-2295.

Video Catalog - "What's On Tape" is a collection of 180 information video titles that are hard to find in video stores. Your catalog copy is free. Contact: Laura Clavio, The Seeker Press, P.O. Box 299, Battle Ground, IN 47920; telephone 317-567-2884.

Public Land - At issue; livestock grazing on public rangelands. "I Belong to the Land" was video taped on ranches in NV, OR, ID, CA and UT and grazing fees, wildlife habitat, riparian systems and other important rangeland issues are discussed in the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) half-hour documentary that costs \$15.00. Contact: Toni Kempf, AFBF Broadcast Services, 225 Touhy Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068; telephone 312-399-5700.

TIP: "By the end of this century, population experts say the world will have 6 billion people. When you think about this in terms of trade, it means that in another decade we'll have a 20-percent increase and the potential market for U.S. agricultural products--just from population gains alone." (Press, July 16, 1988 p.5)

AGRICULTURAL DATA AVAILABLE

The Census of Agriculture provides details on U.S. agriculture and is the most comprehensive source of county-level agricultural information. The following topics are of special interest to small-scale agriculture:

- farms by size and value of sales;
- vegetables, fruit, nursery, greenhouse, and other crops;
- other livestock and livestock products;
- principal occupation and days worked off-farm by farm operator; and
- tenure and characteristics of farm operator

Information from the 1987 Census of Agriculture is now available. If you have specific questions regarding small-scale agriculture and related data, contact: Bureau of the Census, Agriculture Division, Iverson Mall, Washington, DC 20233; telephone 301-763-1113.

(Mention of commercial enterprises or brand names does not constitute endorsement or imply preference by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 15-18, 1990 - "Specialty Crops", the Illinois Specialty Growers Association (ISGA), Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, IL. Contact: Convention and Trade Show Managers, C/O Neasen Company, 1235 S. 8th St., Springfield, IL 62703; telephone 217-744-9350.

January 20, 1990 - Sound Farming and Gardening Workshop, Lake Washington Vocational Institute, Seattle, WA. Contact: Mike Hackett, 600 128th Street SE, Everett, WA 98208; telephone 206-338-2400.

February 8-10, 1990 - Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference, Hunt Valley, MD. Contact: Jarvis Cain, Chairman, Dept. of Agriculture and Resource Economics, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742; telephone 301-454-1406.

February 13-15, 1990 - 1990 New York State Vegetable Conference, Sheraton Inn, Syracuse (Liverpool), NY. Contact: Jean Warholc, NYS Veg. Conf., P.O. Box 356, Ithaca, NY 14851-0356; telephone 607-539-7648.

February 15, 1990 - "Small Farm Day" at the California Farm Equipment Show and International Exposition, Visalia Conventions Center, Visalia, CA. Contact: Clandia Davis,

Small Farm Center, University of California, Davis, CA 95616; telephone 916-757-8910.

February 21-23, 1990 - Idaho Agriculture: The Next 100 Years, Weston Plaza, Twin Falls, ID. Contact: Rick Parker, College of Southern Idaho, P.O. Box 1238, Twin Falls, ID 83303-1238; telephone 208-733-9554, Ext. 119.

April 4-6, 1990 - National Symposium: Stand Establishment in Horticultural Crops, Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport Hilton. Contact: Cathie Bergum, Extension Special Programs, 405 Coffey Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108; telephone 1-800-367-5363 or 612-625-2722.

April 6-7, 1990 - Conference: Farm Machinery Days for the Small and Part-Time Farmer, Dauphin, PA. Contact: James W. Garthe, Agricultural Engineering, 246 Agricultural Engineering Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802; telephone 814-865-7685.

April 20-21, 1990 - MAYHAN (a hawthorn) a new crop, Project Mayhan and Southern Fruit Fellowship (NAFEX), Holiday Inn, Orange, TX. Contact: Herbert Ourand, Route 3, Box 312, Willis, TX 77378; telephone 409-856-4821.

USDA/CSRS/SPPS 5
Office of Small-Scale Agriculture
14th & Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20251-2200

ACQ/SERIALS BRANCH
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

2001 SEP 12 P 1:03

USDA
NAT'L AGRIC LIBRARY